

*African-American Vernacular English  
(AAVE) or Ebonics  
in American literature*

*for upper-intermediate and advanced students  
made by Makhhkhabat Dairbayeva  
time: 50 mins*

*Have you ever heard of AAVE or Ebonics? Do you know or remember the definition?*

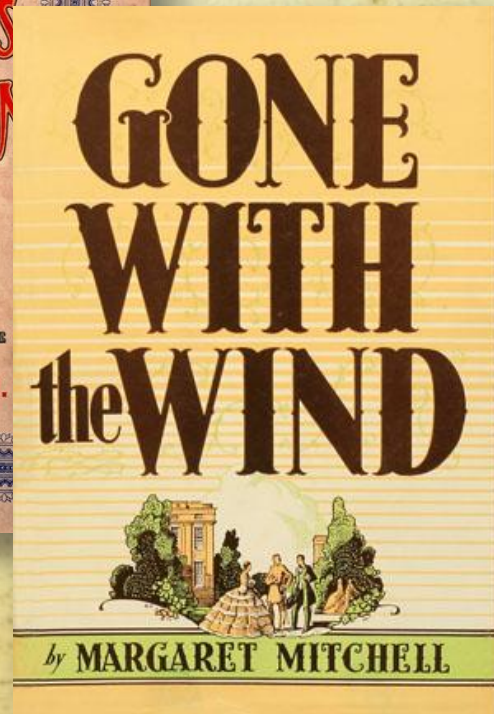
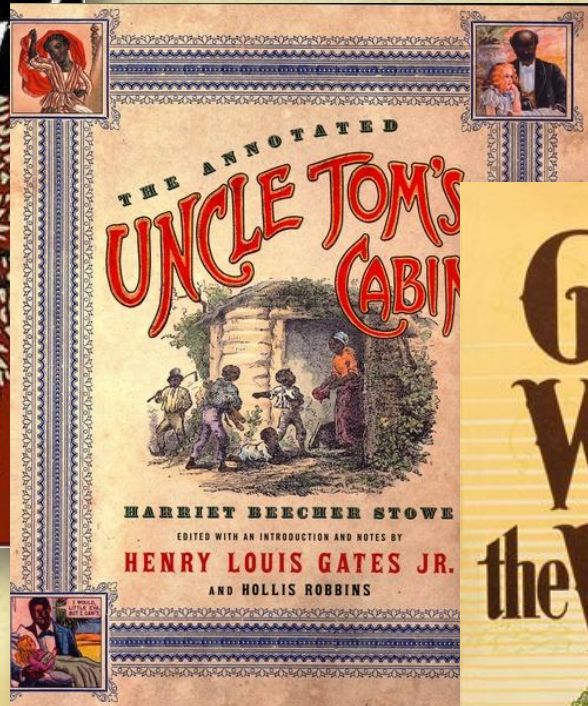
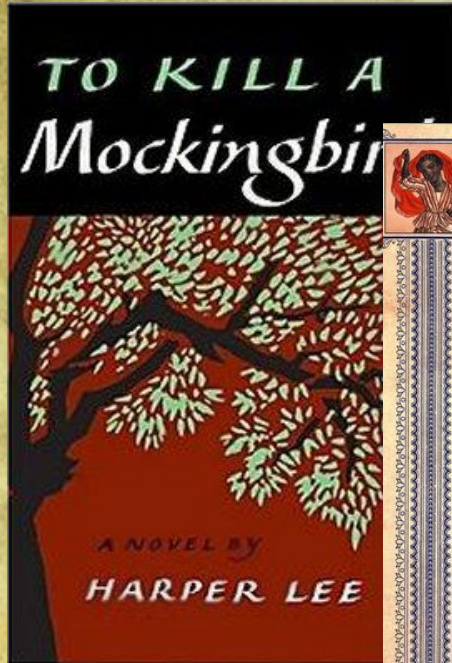
*If not, so*



## **African American Vernacular English**

**(AAVE)** — recently called African American Language (AAL) also called African American English; less precisely Black English, Black Vernacular, Black English Vernacular (BEV), or Black Vernacular English (BVE)—**is an African American variety (dialect, ethnolect, and sociolect) of American English. Non-linguists sometimes call it *Ebonics* (a term that also has other meanings and connotations).**

*We meet many Ebonics in literature:*



*There are some example from these books:*

Yo` folks might be better'n the Cunninghams but it don't count for nothin' the way you're disgracin` 'em – if you can't act fit to eat at the table you can just set here an de at in the kitchen!" [chapter 3, p.25] (To kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee)

Missis says she'll try and 'deem ye, in a year or two; but Lor! nobody never comes up that goes down thar! They kills 'em! I've hearn 'em tell how dey works 'em up on dem ar plantations." [chapter 10, p.103] (Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe)

"Look ter me lak dey'd 'lect all de awficers frum rich gempmum, 'stead of swamp trash" [chapter 1, p.10] (Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell)

*Let's refresh our memory about the novels:*



*Activity 1: Do you recognize these characters? Please name them*

1



2



3



4



5



# *Answers to activity 1:*

- 1) Atticus Finch**
- 2) Jem Finch**
- 3) Scout Finch**
- 4) Dill**
- 5) Arthur "Boo" Radley**

## *Activity 2: "Gone with the Wind"*

What famous phrase Scarlet O'Hara used to say:

- "Follow your instincts. That's where true wisdom manifests itself."
- "If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman."
- "Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission."
- "Women are the real architects of society."
- "I'll think about that tomorrow."



## *Answers to the activity 2:*

- I'll think about that tomorrow. – Scarlett O'Hara

All the others were said by:

- Follow your instincts. That's where true wisdom manifests itself. - By Oprah Winfrey
- If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman. – By Margaret Thatcher.
- Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission – By Eleanor Roosevelt
- Women are the real architects of society. – By Harriet Beecher Stowe

## *Activity 3: "Uncle Tom's Cabin"*

Answer the question: What great event in American History does the book connect with?

- A. The American Revolution
- B. The Civil War
- C. The Louisiana Purchase

*Answer to Activity 3:*

This is the Civil War.

## *Activity 4: Which of three novels do these phrases with AAVE come from:*

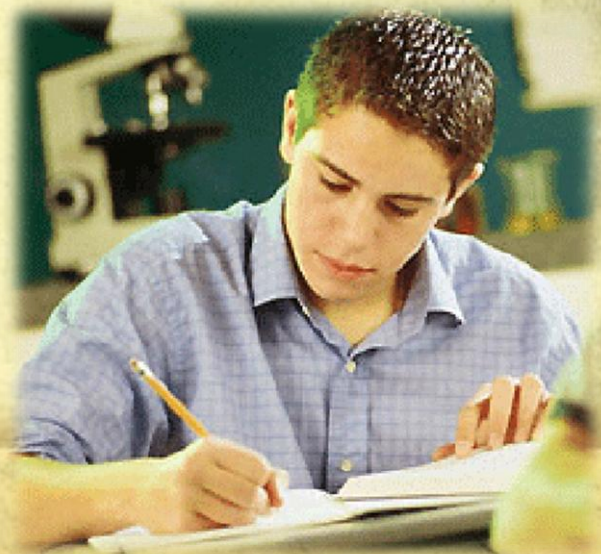
1. "Look ter me lak dey'd 'lect all de awficers frum rich gempmum, 'stead of swamp trash"
2. "Laws, yes, I put 'em there this morning,--I likes to keep my things handy,".
3. "Mr. Finch, " he said, "I was goin` home as usual that evenin', an` when I passed the Ewell place Miss Mayella were on the porch, like she said she were. It seemed real quiet like, an' I didn't quite know why. I was studyin` why, just passin' by, when she says for me to come there and help her a minute. Well, I went inside the fence an` looked around for some kindlin' to work on, but I didn't see none, and she says, `Naw, I got somethin' for you to do in the house. Th` old door's off its hinges an' fall's comin` on pretty fast.
4. Then, more loudly: "Wuthless nigger!
5. The house got so lone some `long about two o'clock I had to turn on the radio.
6. You kain show yo' buzzum befo' three o'clock an' dat dress ain' got no neck an' no sleeves.
7. "Hole onter sumpin' an' suck in yo' breafe," she commanded.
8. "Naw sir, he's in the twitchin' stage, Mr.Heck"
9. "It don't seem to comfort me, but I spect it orter," said Aunt Chloe.
10. Spec dey's at de horsepittle."

## *Answers to activity 4:*

1. **Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell**
2. **Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe**
3. **To kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee**
4. **Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell**
5. **To kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee**
6. **Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mi**
7. **Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell**
8. **To kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee**
9. **Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe**
10. **Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell**

*Follow up activity (may be used as a  
homework):*

*Write your own text (150-200 words) on this  
topic expressing your own opinion (choose only  
one novel)*



*Thank you!*

